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POZZUOLI.

NEAR the entrance of the Bay of Naples is the town of Pozzuoli, situated within a creek of the same name. It was called by the ancients Dicearchia, and was first used as a port (for which it was well calculated on account of its sheltered yet accessible position) by the Greeks of Cumæ, who found it very convenient for facilitating their commerce with the towns on the shores of the Bay of Naples. The natural harbour afforded a refuge to their mariners, who, unskilled in the art of navigation, and unprovided with any but the rudest appliances for the guidance and government of their frail barks, were compelled to make short voyages, and to trust to chance and the nearest shelter nature afforded them, in case of a storm.

Naples (which is now as much distinguished as a trading town as Pozzuoli was at the time of which we are speaking) was considered by the ancient mariners to be too far distant from the entrance of the bay for commercial purposes; besides which, it afforded but poor protection for their vessels, the coast being much exposed. Therefore, Dicearchia became the great dépôt of merchandise and the centre of commerce, leaving to Naples the encouragement of the fine arts, for which it has always been celebrated.

During the second Punic war, Dicearchia passed into the hands of the Romans. It was noted for its hot springs, celebrated for the cure of various diseases; within its limits there were thirty-five natural baths of different sorts of tepid water, and from these baths or pits, called in Latin "putei," the town is said to have taken its name of Puteoli, since modernised to Pozzuoli. Under the yoke of the Romans, Pozzuoli increased in importance, and received into its ports vessels from different parts of the world, laden with tributes of the riches of the conquered nations. In the first century, in the reign of Augustus, it reached the zenith of its prosperity. Ships, richly laden, touched at its ports to land their cargoes; the stuffs of Asia, the corn of Egypt, the various commodities and metals of the East, were brought to this town. Large manufactories now sprang up close to the harbour, and materials received in the raw state were again exported, after having undergone various processes of manufacture.

But the inhabitants of Pozzuoli did not give themselves up entirely to the pursuit of commerce; for the ruins of their magnificent public buildings and beautiful villas still bear evidence of superior taste. On the shore of the gulf, west of the town, was Cicero's villa, called Academia, where he wrote his book entitled "Academical Questions."

The cathedral church of Pozzuoli was built from an ancient temple, constructed of large stones without the aid of mortar or cement. This temple was dedicated to Augustus, under the name of Jupiter, by Calpurnius, a Roman knight, to which fact the inscription on the front bears evidence. It is related that St. Paul once preached there. Puteoli is mentioned in the 28th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles.

The amphitheatre, of which some of the arches and cells still remain, is supposed to be more ancient than that of Vespasian at Rome. A cell is shown in which it is said St. Jannarius and many other martyrs were confined, before their exposure in the arena. An inscription tells us that this saint, being exposed to famished bears, they went down on their knees before him: he was afterwards beheaded.

At the village of Bacoli, between the castle of Baiae, which is represented in our engraving, and the Cape of Miseno, is the Piscina Mirabile, constructed by Sucullus as a reservoir of water for the use of the Roman fleet. Forty-eight massive pillars supported the vaulted roof of this singular edifice; near it were large granaries which furnished the vessels with corn.

Augustus being aware of the importance of its position, and wishing to add still more to the strength of Pozzuoli, undertook vast works of improvement. The Greeks had already built out an immense mole, in the form of a bridge, supported on huge piles, from the point on which the town stood; for

the Cape of Miseno formed an insufficient barrier against the violence of the open sea. This was a bold work, but Augustus undertook one of far greater magnitude, in connecting the Lucrine lake with that of Avernus, and thus establishing a communication with the sea; so that there were three harbours, that of Pozzuoli, of Lucrine, and of Avernus, capable of receiving the Roman fleets. He gave to Agrippa the management of this great work. The lake of Avernus was surrounded by steep banks overgrown with wild masses of vegetation. The ancients described the fumes it emitted as being so malignant that even birds could not fly over it, but dropped down dead. This circumstance, joined with the depth and gloom of the lake, led the ancients to take it for the gate or entrance of hell; and, accordingly, Homer brings Ulysses to Avernus, as to the mouth of the infernal regions; and, in imitation of the great bard, Virgil makes Æneas descend this way to the same abodes—

" And here th' innavigable lake extends,
O'er whose unhappy waters, void of light,
No bird presumes to steer his airy flight;
Such deadly stenches from the depth arise,
And steaming sulphur, that infects the skies.
From thence the Grecian bards their legends make,
And give the name Avernus to the lake."

Aeneid, Book vi.

Agrippa had the forests levelled with the ground, and thus allowing the malignant effluvia to escape, dispelled the gloom of horror and superstition by which it had so long been beset.

Pozzuoli was the scene of one of the mad acts of the monster Caligula. In imitation of Xerxes, he ordered a bridge of boats to be constructed, at an immense expense, across the bay, between Baiae and Pozzuoli, for no other purpose than that he might be able to boast that he had walked over the sea as over dry land, because some astrologer had once declared that there was as little chance of Caligula succeeding to the throne, as there was of his walking across the bay. The road was paved and covered with sand, and had parapets on each side. The first day after its completion, he crossed it on horseback, crowned with oak, followed by an immense crowd: the second day he traversed it in a triumphal chariot, carrying on his head a crown of laurel, given by the Parthians to Darius.

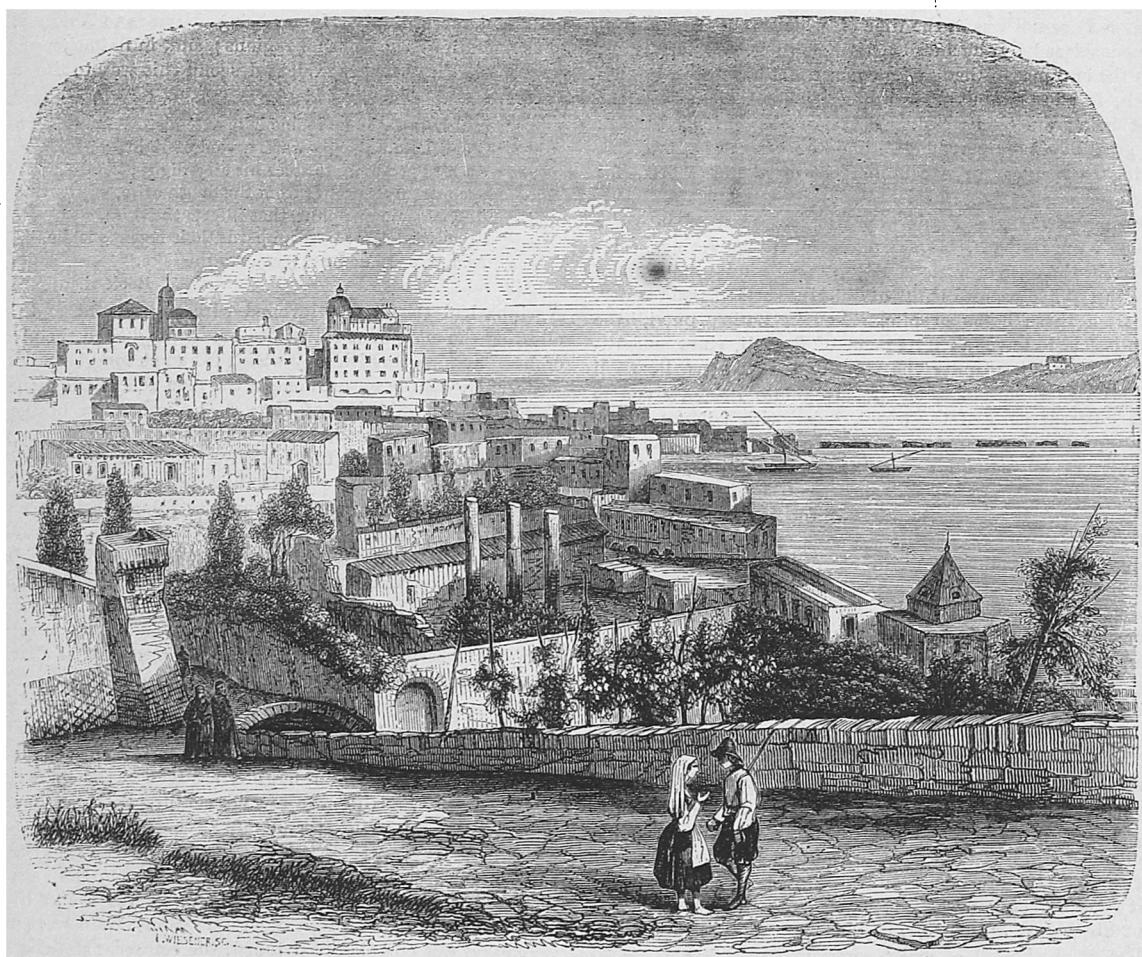
The remains of the temple of Serapis form the most striking monument in Pozzuoli. The three remaining columns, of fine coppolino marble, are seen in the engraving. It was erected, during the second century B.C., in honour of the Egyptian Jupiter; and, after remaining buried under the sea for several centuries, was covered by an eruption of the Solfatara, which dispersed the waters. On the excavation of this temple, in the year 1751, it was found to be almost perfect; and though its preservation would have been very easy, was completely stripped, the columns, statues, and vases, by which it was adorned, being carried away. This building, although sacred, contained a number of baths to which the public were doubtless admitted. In ancient times the practice of medicine was generally connected with, and protected by, religion; this building was evidently planned to serve these two purposes. In the quadrangle was a portico supported by Corinthian columns; in the centre of this atrium four steps led up to the place upon which the antiquaries of the last century assert that a circular temple, the cupola of which was supported by sixteen pillars of red marble, was found standing, and within this round enclosure they discovered an octangular bath, which was doubtless used in the great ablutions. This is the form of the Christian baptistries of the fourth century, such as we find at Rome, in the baptistry of Constantine. Those constructed at Aix, at Riez in Provence, and at Ravenna in Italy, were of the same form. The Christians evidently borrowed the design of their fonts from these octangular baths enclosed in circular colonnades, which were

used by the ancients for both medical and religious purposes. In the temple of Serapis, behind the quadrangular peristyle, are square apartments, which must have been used as private baths, and not, as it has been supposed, for the use of the priests.

Behind Pozzuoli rises the volcanic mountain of Solfatara, called by the ancients the Court of Vulcan. On its summit is an oval plain, surrounded by hills, which appears to have sunk to its present level by the falling in of the top of the mountain, during some eruption. Some conjecture that the hollow beneath is connected with mount Vesuvius. Mr. Swinburne says that the ground quaked and resounded under his feet, and by laying his ear close to the earth, he could distinguish the bubbling and hissing of boiling water; yet, upon part of this crust or floor, chestnut trees flourish in

Virgil, but it is thought to be much more ancient than Rome.

On the hill above is the tomb of Virgil. It is related by Ælius Donatus, a celebrated grammarian of the fourth century, in his life of Virgil, that his ashes were carried to Naples, by order of Augustus, and deposited on the road to Pozzuoli. Several authors describe the cinerary urn of Virgil, but nothing now remains but a square room with an arched roof, overgrown with briars and weeds, among which flourishes an ancient laurel, which tradition says planted itself upon the tomb of the poet. It is said that it is impossible to destroy the plant, for that if cut down it is sure to bud again; but, in spite of this, slips of the tree are planted around to preserve the species, and the plant itself does not appear more than sixty years old.



VIEW OF POZZUOLI, ON THE GULF OF NAPLES.

perfect vigour, and a variety of shrubs shoot up along its banks, where they find level ground into which to strike root, and are out of the blasting smoke. On the north side of the mountain the waters find vent, and pursue their way in a burning stream to the lake of Aquano, a circular lake nearly two miles in circumference, embosomed in hills, which has all the appearance of a volcanic crater. Its waters are filled with myriads of frogs. At Solfatara, manufactures of sulphur, alum, and vitriol are carried on.

The country around Pozzuoli is rich in interesting antiquities; between the town and Naples is the celebrated grotto of Posilipo, a gallery cut through a mountain of the same name. It is half a mile in length, and sufficiently broad for two carriages to pass. Various accounts are given of its origin; the common people ascribe it to the enchantment of

The shores of Pozzuoli, once the scene of Roman magnificence, luxury, and profligacy, are now deserted. Here and there, amid the luxuriant though neglected vegetation, decaying monuments meet the eye, forcibly reminding one of the former greatness and opulence of this town. In the month of June, the scene is rendered still more desolate by the terrible malaria, which extends its sway over the vast and beautiful part of Italy lying along the coasts of the Mediterranean, driving away the principal inhabitants. The effects of the malaria, though differing according to the constitution and habits of its victims, are always most distressing. Sometimes the sufferers are carried off in a few days, but more frequently they are attacked by an intermittent fever, in which case they gradually lose strength, and sometimes linger for several years.